

**MINUTES OF THE
STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR PUBLIC AND HIGHER
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

September 14, 1999 - 9:00 a.m.- Room 303 State Capitol

Members Present:

Sen. David H. Steele
Rep. Lloyd Frandsen, Co-Chair
Sen. Joe Hull
Sen. Howard Stephenson
Rep. Patrice Arent
Jan Ferre'
Val Finlayson
David Greene
Sal Jansson
Jill Kennedy
Steven O. Laing
Dolores Riley
Stephen Ronnenkamp

Members Excused:

George Emert
Cecelia Foxley

Members Absent:

Rep. Keele Johnson
Pat Eyre
Maria Farrington
Joyce Gray
Con Rowley
Phyllis Sorensen
Paul Sybrowsky

Staff Present:

James Wilson, Associate General Counsel
Wayne Lewis, Research Analyst
Wendy Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

1. Call to Order - Sen. Steele called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MOTION: Jan Ferre' moved to approve the minutes of November 9, 1998. The motion passed unanimously.

Sen. Steele reviewed the history, authorization, and funding of the Strategic Planning Committee. He was concerned that the intent and direction of the committee had been diluted and general enthusiasm for strategic planning had been lost. Senator Steele noted, however, that the committee has an opportunity to select and focus on important educational issues, and propose ways to assist the Legislature.

Mr. Jim Wilson, Associate Legislative General Counsel, reviewed the 1999 statutory changes which created new responsibilities for the committee, including meeting quarterly rather than each month and receiving a written strategic plan from both public and higher education every three years. The committee is to monitor and analyze goals, objectives, and action plans of each strategic plan and assesses how well the plan relates to educational needs and to the citizens of Utah. He described the kinds of plans and recommendations which are appropriate for the committee to send to the Legislature. He reviewed a report on Applied Technology Education Funding prepared by the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst and proposed the committee be aware of the activities and recommendations of the "Utah Tomorrow" committee. Mr. Wilson suggested, in light of the demands and time limitations now placed on the strategic planning process, that the committee consider the best way to meet those responsibilities it has been given.

Mr. Steven Laing, State Superintendent of Public Education, suggested that there seems to be confusion over the committee's current responsibilities and suggested that it explore establishing relationships with other groups studying educational issues, such as the Task Force on Educational Accountability and the Joint Liaison Committee for Public and Higher Education.

Sen. Steele reviewed portions of a letter sent by the Strategic Planning Task Force in 1998 to the Education Interim Committee. He felt the committee is in a unique position to identify and propose resolution to education issues not dealt with by other entities.

Review of Higher Education's Strategic Plan as Required under Section 53A- 1a-102 - Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education - A representative from the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education was not available to present the Master Plan for Higher Education report.

Sen. Steele said the committee is required by law to review strategic planning in higher education. He requested higher education to prepare as quickly as possible, and even in draft form if necessary, an executive summary of higher education's strategic plan, and mail it to committee members. He was concerned that higher education had not placed a significant amount of importance on its strategic planning efforts to have it brought before the committee in a timely manner.

Rep. Frandsen was also concerned that the importance of strategic planning has diminished. He feels there is a pressing need to deal with significant and difficult education issues, and was concerned that the committee might be hesitant to deal with those issues. He suggested the committee list and prioritize current fundamental education issues. If the committee will aggressively deal with major educational concerns, it will have a significant impact upon education on Utah.

Sen. Steele reviewed a summary of a 1998 discussion on public education recommendations for the following issues:

- 1) Improve academic achievement at all levels for all students to include: developing performance standards, providing elementary school specialists in specific subjects, particularly reading, providing improved ATE opportunities as secondary student options, increasing graduation requirements to a state standard, providing funds for English immersion, including preschool classes at elementary schools, and the attention that had been given to those goals;
- 2) Extension of the school year by utilizing summer school and taking advantage of a fifth term of a school year;
- 3) Deal with the adequacy of per-student allocations, and provide necessary support; and
- 4) Professional development efforts in both public and higher education, to include extending the teacher contract year or providing professional teacher leave periods and investigating the utilization of career ladder funds if determined advisable by local leaders.

Review of Public Education's Implementation of its Strategic Plan as Required under Section 53A-1a-202 - State Office of Education - Mr. Laing reviewed constitutional requirements and educational statutes that relate to the State Board of Education and identified statutes no longer applicable to the overall responsibility of public education. He also identified philosophical language in specific statutes that needed clarification. He said specific educational activities, evaluations, and assessments should occur on a regular basis and emphasized the lack of resources needed to fully implement state mandates. Mr. Laing reviewed the following 12 goals adopted by the State Board of Education in September, 1999:

1. Eliminate the negative impact of large class size and redesign middle/ junior high levels;
2. Provide for safe, orderly schools that teach safe behavior;
3. Enrich the educational experience of all school students by recognizing and valuing the diversity among students, staff, and patrons in all schools;
4. Provide and implement professional development and staff training through the REACH Program;
5. Increase opportunities for professional development of educators, including appropriate accountability procedures;
6. Encourage parental involvement through SEP's and SEOP's, the PTA, and parent centers;
7. Define high standards for student performance and align those with assessment and accountability procedures;
8. Support parents in efforts to provide preschool literacy and readiness opportunities;
9. Increase accessibility and use of appropriate technology in every school;
10. Strengthen communication relative to the mission, goals, and progress of public education in Utah;
11. Expand and strengthen school/ business partnerships that support education; and
12. Continue to emphasize the relevance of education for each student through personalized mechanisms.

Mr. Laing said the state board is committed to these goals, and is not insensitive to difficulties some goals may create for local schools and school districts. He reiterated that it is important to identify public education needs and to allocate or reallocate resources to meet those needs.

Sen. Steele asked the state board to submit suggestions for specific changes in the code for review and action by the committee. He asked the committee for ways it could help the state board communicate its program to the Legislature. He felt it would be useful for members of the education community to prepare evaluation statements supporting or opposing the 12 goals. Strategic planning might be able to measure how well each goal was achieved or what is required to implement these goals. He said program assessment is essential and could be done internally or by an external source such as West Ed.

Mr. Laing pointed out that some legislative intent language in certain bills has been difficult, if not impossible, to achieve without adequate funding. He has appreciated the continuous communication between the Legislature and the education community and suggested the committee could assist the state board by reviewing, endorsing and recommending adequate funding for components of the public education strategic plan. Ms. Jill Kennedy felt the committee could be the appropriate forum to filter through all public educational issues.

Sen. Steele explained that the state board has identified important goals and proposed ways to achieve them. He asked if specific educational groups should be assigned to assess whether or not the board is achieving its goals. If they are not meeting their goals, then the board could identify those things needed to reach them. Interactions with assessment groups could become the focus of meetings between the state board and the strategic planning committee. He suggested that using this procedure might provide a better opportunity for the Legislature to understand a larger perspective of educational needs.

Mr. Laing reported on four additional items:

1. Improving academic achievement - The state board supports efforts to quantify academic achievement. HB 33 allows schools to focus more on criterion-referenced tests. They seem to be better indicators of individual student achievement. Early grade levels will emphasize literacy. The core curriculum is in the process of being revised;
2. Extending learning opportunities - Pilot programs for a fifth term have been successful, but since they have been funded with experimental monies, fiscal resources are limited to a three-year pilot period. Unless new resources are available, pilot programs will cease;
3. Increasing per-student funding - Reaching the national average is unrealistic in Utah. It would be more meaningful to look at regions or other states with similar demography in order to set realistic goals; and
4. Improving professional development - The state board reorganized the existing state advisory committee on teacher education by combining it with another body that will enable it to address more weighty issues and make necessary decisions regarding teacher development programs.

Sen. Steele recommended the committee report to the Education Interim Committee in November on progress made on these four issues. He suggested the committee prepare a report on the condition of education in Utah to be read in each chamber and/or have it included in the journal on the first day of the Legislative General Session.

Sen. Hull said strategic planning for education has been productive and effective, but felt the Legislature has not given credence to its efforts. He believes the committee is in an excellent position to correlate educational planning, but felt it would have greater impact if it served as a clearinghouse. He proposed a state of the state of education report be submitted the first day of session, and the committee serve as a clearinghouse for recommendations developed by other committees or agencies.

He recommended seeking the support of as many advocacy groups as possible. Rep. Arent suggested that higher education be included in the state of the state report. Sen. Steele asked Mr. David Colvin, higher education planning coordinator, to explain the proposed public education state of the state report to the commissioner of higher education and invite her to participate.

MOTION: Rep. Frandsen moved to established a report card system which would be used by the education community to grade the state board's progress in achieving its 12 stated goals. The motion passed unanimously.

MOTION: Sen. Hull moved that staff draft a request to the management committee that a a state-of-education report be presented the first day of the Legislative Session in January, 2000. The report would be prepared by the State Board of Education, the System of Higher Education, and the business community. The motion passed unanimously.

The committee will meet November 15, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. in room 303 State Capitol to hear the higher education strategic planning report, review the public education report card, and prepare information to be included in the state-of-education report. It was noted that the committee must report its recommendations on November 17th to the Education Interim Committee and needs to discuss ATE funding prior to meeting with the interim committee.

Sen. Steele asked committee members to study the ATE funding report and read all available information for discussion at the November 15th meeting. Mr. Wilson briefly reviewed the committee assignment to study applied technology education criteria for policies in the service regions. and double funding procedures for ATE students.

MOTION: Mr. Laing moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously at 11:21 a.m.

